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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

NOVEMBER 1st, 1856.

NOTE ON HAYDN'S MASSES.

The Mass No. VII., as numbered by Breitkopf and Härtel, of Leipsic, and reviewed from their score in the *Musical Times* for October, forms No. XV. of Novello's Edition of the Masses of Haydn. The MS. score, from which Mr. Novello made his arrangement, shows a great incompleteness in the German copy; where not only the wind parts for bassoons, horns, &c., are wanting, but actual features of the music. With its full wind orchestra (clarinets excepted), the music acquires fresh importance, and is even calculated for a higher position than we had assigned to it.

TRUTH ABOUT MUSIC & MUSICIANS.

LETTER II.—MOZART.

Translated from the German by SABILLA NOVELLO.

"And king he was, in the realms of song."—*v* Zedlitz.

AMADEUS MOZART was born on the 27th of January, 1756, and died as early as the 5th of December, 1791; therefore he lived but 35 years; but what did he not accomplish in this short time! So many and such great things, that he alone could have completed them, because he was, and desired to be, devoted to one single object—*music*. Nature had furnished him so richly with her gifts, that he would have excelled in whatever he had undertaken, for in him were united an inexhaustible imagination, and a clear, quickly-discerning understanding. He would have become a great painter, or a great writer, he would have excelled in political affairs, had he thus chosen, or had this fashion prevailed in his day. Fortunately, he perceived that Man can follow but one object satisfactorily, and thus he became a true and entire musician.

As a child, he appeared as a performer, and, for the existing period, excelled to an extraordinary degree. Luckily in those days it was not as at present, when those alone can become first-rank performers, who devote themselves all day and every day exclusively to mechanical execution, neglecting all intellectual cultivation. Some hours daily practice was sufficient for Mozart, and the then existing artistic world. His great successes and brilliant triumphs were to be gained in his character of composer. In his earliest years he displayed inclination towards composition; and his experienced, well-informed

father, recognizing the talent of his boy, guided and sustained him in every way.

I have not the least intention of relating to you, in this letter, the well-known history of Mozart's life; I shall keep in view my aim, which is, to show you great masters—what they were, how they became such, and what they accomplished. In the case of Mozart, I shall endeavour to disprove the generally-received, but erroneous opinion, that he, as a genius, composed by instinct, without clear knowledge; and that all his great, beautiful, and transcendent ideas came to him as in a dream. Such assertions can only emanate from such as have a dim and incomprehensive cognisance of an artistic being,—who are unacquainted with Mozart's first and early compositions,—and who have not read, or not understood, the history of his musical education. Mozart's first compositions betray as little genius as the first compositions of any other musician or composer. They are merely usual imitations of such musical works of his time, as first met his eye; the operas, also, which he wrote in Italy, are written completely in the style then extant, and are not, in any way, superior to their models. The frequent journeys, however, which he made to Italy during his youth, were of immeasurable value, and had decided influence in developing his talent of composition. The exquisite scenes of that country, early awakened his sense of the beautiful; and the magic of the pathetic, lovely, and flowing melodies which already distinguished the works of the Italian school, then much more worthy than at present, powerfully impressed his feelings: he acknowledged the irresistible sway which those enchanting melodies exercised on men's souls; and, at a later period, *by his melodies he reigned throughout the world*.

The charm of melody displays itself in all his works, in all his ideas, even in the most terrible and demoniacal,—nay, even in the most complicated counterpoint; for instance, remember the Overture to the *Zauberflöte*, with its fugue-like construction. You will see by a passage in one of his letters, quoted below, that this was not the result of mere instinct, but that he had good and well-weighed reasons for his choice. He had learnt *melody* in Italy; in France, which he twice visited, his attention was drawn towards *piquant*, brilliant effects, and he endeavored more especially to give his compositions a decided character. This is an important circumstance, generally overlooked by those who speak ignorantly of Mozart. Speaking of a symphony, which he wrote for Paris, he writes thus to his father:—"The symphony began, and in the middle of the *allegro* occurred a passage which I well knew would please; the audience were delighted, and applauded loudly. *As I knew*

when I wrote it, what an effect it would have, I introduced it again towards the end, where it formed a *da capo*; as I heard that here all final *allegros*, like the first, begin with all the instruments, and generally in unison, I began it with only two violins, *piano*, for eight bars—then followed a *forte*. The audience, as I expected, cried: ‘Hush!’ during the *piano*, and when the *forte* came, with it came the applause.”

“A true artist pens no line without aim or meaning,” says Goethe. That Mozart, also, thought and acted thus, you must acknowledge from the above passage, and you will perceive the emptiness of the oft-employed phrase “Music of reflection.” Reflection alone, without creative power, can no more produce eminent works, than can creative power without reflection,—without the strong understanding which seeks perfection, and regulates genius. A union of both is necessary; the greatest genius will never complete a worthy composition without due consideration of means and end.

But hear further, how little Mozart trusted to instinct or inspiration; how much, on the contrary, he employed studied knowledge in his works. In a letter to his father, written from Munich, where he was writing the *Idomeneo*, he says:—“Tell me, do you not find that the speech of the subterranean voice is too long? Think it over well—imagine the theatre. The voice must be awful—it must be really believed supernatural; how can this result be attained if the speech be too long? *If the speech of the ghost in ‘Hamlet’ were not so long, it would be more effective.* In my case, the speech can easily be shortened, and thus gain more than it loses.”

He writes to his father about the *Entführung* thus:—“Osmin’s rage verges towards the comic by the introduction of Turkish music. The ‘Drum beim Barte des Propheten,’ &c., is in the same *tempo*, it is true, but in rapid notes; and as his rage ever increases, the *allegro assai* (after an apparent close) must of course be very effective in an entirely new key and time, because a man in a violent rage loses all controul, measure, and order; he forgets himself, and so the music also should lose its symmetry. But as the passions, however violent, should never be expressed to a disgusting degree, and as music, though painting the most shocking emotions, should never distress the ear, but please it, and ever remain *music*, I have selected no key remote from F, but a relative, not the nearer, D minor, but the farther, A minor. In Belmont’s air, ‘O wie ängstlich,’ the beating heart is indicated by the violins in octaves; we hear the trembling hesitation,—we hear how the swelling breast heaves, expressed by a *crescendo*,—we hear whispers and sighs, expressed by the first

violins, *con sordini*, and a flute in unison. In Constance’s air, I have changed the exclamation ‘hui’ into ‘schnell.’ I know not what our German poets may think; if they do not understand the drama, in reference to operas, they should, at least, not cause their personæ to speak as though to pigs! The overture is quite short—alternately *piano* and *forte*; with the latter is introduced Turkish music, modulated throughout; and I believe that the audience will not go to sleep, even if they have not slept all the night before.”

From Mannheim the youthful Mozart writes thus to his father, on a Mass by the Abbé Vogler:—“I went to the Service written ‘as new as nails’ by Vogler, and rehearsed the day before yesterday. I never heard such a thing in my life—nothing seems to match. He rushes into a key as if he would drag you into it by the hair of your head,—not gradually, or with any peculiarity, but plump into the middle. I do not mention the working-out of his subject: I shall only say that a service by Vogler could not possibly please any musician worthy of this name; for instance,—I hear a subject which is not so bad; of course it will not remain merely ‘not so bad,’ but will become—beautiful? Heaven forbid!—bad and worse—in two or three different ways. Thus:—hardly has the subject appeared, before another comes and ruins it; or else he ends the theme so unnaturally, that it loses its beauty; or else it is badly introduced, in the wrong place; or lastly, it is spoilt by the instrumentation.” This passage contains so many proofs of Mozart’s fine perception, deep reflection on what has been remarked, and clear knowledge thus attained of what is effective in composition, what to be avoided, and what sought after, that it alone would suffice to destroy the belief that his best works were written as fancy dictated, without study and prescience. In order to confirm my argument, I shall take phrase by phrase separately, and endeavour to interpret each.

“*He rushes into a key as though he would drag you into it by the hair of your head,—not gradually, or with any peculiarity, but plump into the middle.*” Thus we learn one resource of composition—*modulation to different keys*; this was, and is, badly employed by many composers, in two manners—firstly, by too frequent modulations to remote keys, which obliterate the unity of the original key, and lose their effect from over-use; and secondly, by too sudden modulations, which Mozart styles “dragged by the hair of the head.” It is certain that sudden modulations may be of the greatest effect, but then they must be introduced, as Mozart observed, not *plump*, but in a *peculiar manner*. If you examine the works of his best period, with reference to his principles of modulation, you will perceive that

modulations to remote keys rarely occur in his larger or smaller single pieces; many of his short songs—for instance, that of Papageno,—remain in the tonic, with passing modulations to the dominant and sub-dominant. In longer pieces, he modulates to other keys, mostly nearly related, and never to so many that the principal key should lose predominance. Should, however, the subject to be described give occasion to a sudden change, he makes it, not *plump*, but in a peculiar, and never in a *harsh* manner. Remember, for example, the unexpected modulation from E \flat major to D major, in the septett of *Don Giovanni*. These principles of modulation, with very few exceptions, govern all his works, and were expressed, even in his youth, by the above-quoted dry observations. Can we then possibly believe that he was not well-acquainted with this resource, and that his genius alone suggested the use of modulation in his compositions?

"I hear a subject which is not so bad; of course it will not remain merely 'not so bad,' but will become—beautiful?" In this phrase he enters into details, and speaks of the effective power of single subjects; therefore he has observed and reflected on this point; *"of course it will not remain merely 'not so bad,' but will become—beautiful?"* These few words discover one of the deepest secrets of his art, with respect to the beauty of his themes. To be more clear, instead of subject, we will say—a melody, or a phrase. If you listen to the first bars of a phrase in some of his compositions, you will find them, *not so bad*, but *not yet beautiful*. Listen to a few more bars—beauty increases from bar to bar, to the end, which in general crowns the whole subject. Make the same experiment with the phrases of inferior masters. In general, the commencing bars also are "*not so bad*," but the increased beauty of continuation is wanting; on the contrary, the "*not bad*" commencements become weaker and unmeaning. The most convincing proof that this growing beauty of individual subjects is not a matter of chance with great masters, would be to examine their works from their first creation to their last completion. How long did Mozart turn and turn a melody in his mind before he could be satisfied with it? but precisely because he composed and corrected in his mind, his ideas generally flowed easily and correctly on paper, and thus superficial observers asserted that genius inspired his ideas thus written down at once. Other eminent masters have acted in like manner; witness the scrap-book of the great Beethoven—see how often he altered a melody, and each time wrote beneath "*meilleur*."

We must now examine what Mozart found existing in music: Handel's oratorios, Gluck's operas, and Haydn's works, in all kinds of instru-

mental music. These were his principal models. He diligently studied Haydn's compositions, and adopted what this master had invented and improved. The dedication of his three quartetts to Haydn, proves this in his own words. Like Haydn, Mozart chose a distinct and pregnant theme, and worked it out in various manners through the whole piece. No great difference or progress is observable in the form, construction, conduct, and development of his sonatas, quartetts, and symphonies, to those of Haydn; on one point they differ, and this is an improvement. Haydn's phrases are sometimes rather intricately constructed, not easily recognized in their inversions; his periods are small, for sometimes subjects of four bars serve as periods and themes; *piano* and *forte* passages, and other reliefs, or even short melodies, follow each other in quick succession, more from mannerism than true sentiment. Mozart's phrases are generally grander and broader,—his melodies longer and more continuously perfected; he employed melodious periods instead of many successive short melodies. He separated more sharply light and shade, and threw both into larger masses; expressed soft and tender passages with greater detail and care; and conducted majestic subjects with greater strength and dignity. Thus his compositions are clearer and more impressive, and vibrate longer on the ear and heart. Haydn flew, like a butterfly, from flower to flower; Mozart nestled, like a bee, deep within each chalice. His natural character enabled him to pierce to the inner regions of the soul,—to estimate the heights and depths of sentiment and passion, through which his enchanting melodies breathe like balmy Italian air, and thus his music possesses supreme power in causing emotion and irresistible rapture in the hearts of all men. In addition to this, instrumentation, as left by Haydn, improved under Mozart's genius: he used it more harmoniously and charmingly; he perceived, more distinctly and fundamentally, the nature and character of different instruments, especially wind-instruments, and employed them advantageously, either in their individual capability, or united to others, with beautiful, and often novel effect. His orchestral works express more fully and generally the sentiments of the soul; for, from the lightest, gayest, or most pathetic emotion, to the darkest, most stormy passion, he painted all with equal truth and beauty, and always with melodious charm and instrumental harmony. This extraordinary power of expression may be attributed to the fact, that *from early youth* he composed operas, and thus soon was lead, by the words of poets, to describe individual feelings and character. This is an important consideration for composers. Even when Mozart wrote instrumental works, his imagination was accustomed, by operatic exercise, always to describe particular sentiments. Perhaps

the dullness of many modern instrumental works may be explained by the fact, that their authors have seldom or never composed vocal music, and are not accustomed to express one especial sentiment throughout a whole piece. Thus, also, may perhaps be explained the failure of operas written by musicians, who, for ten, twenty years, have composed for the pianoforte, and suddenly determined to write an opera, as Thalberg and others have lately done.

Mozart found, in opera music, two distinctive schools: the then prevailing one, in Italy and Germany, contained elements of melody and certain expression, but its conventional form ill coincided with the natural course of feeling and passion. Strict rules, from which no composer might dare to deviate, were, twenty to forty bars repetition of the same passage,—return of the principal melody at a given time,—certain symphonies before, between, and after each song,—&c. On the other hand, Gluck had appeared with his opera reform: he banished these forms, and endeavoured to adapt them to different personages, characters, situations, or sentiments. In the Italian dedication of his *Alceste* to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, he wrote the golden maxim, which every composer should bear in mind. He says: "I desire to restrain music within its true bounds; it should serve to enhance the expression of poetry, and increase the interest of situation, without interrupting action, or lessening its force by useless ornaments. It appears to me, that music should be to poetry, what bright color, and light, and shade are to a well-drawn design—they enliven the figures, without injuring their outline. * * * * * My task was, to prepare the audience, by my overture, for the action,—to announce, so to speak, the *contents* of the opera; the accompaniments were to be in accordance with the situation or passion,—not interrupt uselessly, or interfere with the strength or warmth of declamation. Further, I earnestly endeavoured to attain a beautiful simplicity: I would not shine by difficulties, at the cost of clearness; the invention of a novelty only pleased me, when emanating naturally from situation or sentiment; and I never hesitated sacrificing some rule, to gain good effect. Such are my principles; and the result has justified them, and has proved that simplicity, truth, and nature are the true bases of the beautiful in all works of art." Gluck, by these principles, certainly did much for *truth of expression*; but he was deficient in technical knowledge,—in the perception and gift of uniting with his reformatory measures, that loveliness and charm of melody,—that variety of themes and passages,—and that rich instrumentation for which Haydn and Mozart were distinguished. On this account, his music never made way in Italy and Germany;

it could only please in France, where, against Lulli's dry music, Gluck's school, with all its simple truth, appeared lovely and brilliant.

The originality and force of expression in Gluck's music attracted Mozart; but his clear intellect and practical mind also acknowledged that this too strict adherence to nature might please the understanding, and therefore all those whose understanding was predominant; but that the charm and attraction of music was more than duly sacrificed; and that therefore Gluck's manner would not command universal applause, but merely gain a small circle of admirers. Mozart amalgamated, so to speak, all the existing beauties with those he invented. He freed himself from the Italian stereotypes,—adapted a more natural form,—retaining, however, effective ornament and proportionate prolongations, which hold the hearer in the same frame of mind, until he enters fully into the sentiment expressed, is satisfied, but not satiated, and can readily be moved by some ensuing emotion. However wearisome a long-dragged-out performance may be, *it is equally disagreeable to be disturbed from a pleasant state of mind before we have been able fully to enjoy it.* I mention this maxim of experience, as it will serve to explain, at a later period, an error of our modern composers.

To beauty and truth, Mozart united in his works a *characteristic* excellence,—never attained by his precursors, nor even by his successors, to such a pre-eminent degree,—so that, in this respect, he stands alone, unequalled in his giant might. Gluck attained much, but within a narrow circle; he painted for us the Grecian hero—world, and in *Armida*—a magic realm; but Mozart has portrayed the most dissimilar regions and circumstances, each in a peculiar tone-color, and containing manifold characters consonant to the whole, yet individually distinct. What an immeasurable difference between the entire *Don Giovanni* and the *Zauberflöte*! In one, the fire and voluptuousness of the south,—in the other, the airy world of magic. The *Entführung* transports us to the east; and *Titus* seems to breathe of ancient Rome. Within these distinct circles move other distinct *musical* characters. In the *Zauberflöte* how clearly divided are Sarastro and Papageno, Papageno and the Moor, Pamina and the Queen of night!

The same wonderful characteristic differences may be found in each of Mozart's operas, embellished by the sounds of sweet melodies and harmonious instrumentation! Compare any of the modern operas you may like with those of Mozart, and he will appear to you like Shakespeare compared to —; well, to any of our modern dramatists!